

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 042449

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DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:JTREICHEL
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SCA/VO:HNEWMMASTER
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TAGS:CVIS,OCLR,NO,UR,US (S/S ODESSA, S/S YAKOV BONDARENKO)

SUBJECT: EXCHANGES OF PERSONNEL ON SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS

REF: MOSCOW 2494, 2495, 2547

1. SOVIET VICE CONSUL ZHUK MET WITH TREICHEL OF EUR/SOV AND NEWMMASTER OF SCA/VO AT ZHUK'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE EXCHANGE OF CREW PERSONNEL ON SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS. US EMBASSY CONSUL CLIFFORD GROSS, IN WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATED IN PART OF MEETING.

2. ZHUK WANTED GUIDANCE ON BEST WAY OF HANDLING INSTANCE WHERE SOVIETS DESIRED TO TRANSFER CREW MEMBERS FROM ONE MERCHANT SHIP TO ANOTHER WHILE IN A US PORT. HE STATED
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PAGE 02 STATE 042449

CREW REPLACEMENTS ARE BROUGHT FROM THE USSR ON A MERCHANT SHIP AND ARE TRANSFERRED AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN SOME PROBLEMS WITH LOCAL INS AUTHORITIES ON THIS AND HE WANTED TO SEE IF A PROCEDURE APPLICABLE IN ALL CASES COULD BE WORKED OUT. HE WAS TOLD INFORMALLY THAT THE MOST LIKELY WAY OF HANDLING SUCH MATTERS ON A REGULAR BASIS WOULD BE FOR THE REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL TO OBTAIN INDIVIDUAL

TRANSIT VISAS BEFORE ARRIVAL IN US. IT WAS STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS AN INFORMAL OPINION AND THAT INS WASHINGTON WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER THE MATTER. ZHUK INDICATED

HE HAD HOPED THIS PROBLEM COULD BE HANDLED WITH INS WITHOUT SPECIAL VISAS. HE WAS TOLD HE WOULD BE INFORMED WHEN A DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED.

3. ZHUK ALSO REQUESTED ASSISTANCE IN THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF TRANSFERRING 14 SOVIETS FROM THE YAKOV BONDARENKO TO THE ODESSA IN NEW ORLEANS. PROBLEM WAS BONDARENKO WAS IN NEW ORLEANS AT THAT MOMENT, BUT ODESSA NOT SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE UNTIL FEBRUARY 26 AND BONDARENKO SCHEDULED TO SAIL LATE THAT DAY. ZHUK STATED THAT THE 14 WERE PASSENGERS ON THE BONDARENKO BUT HE ALSO SAID THEY WERE DOING REGULAR WORK ON THE SHIP. AT THAT TIME DEPARTMENT DID NOT HAVE CREW LIST VISAS FOR EITHER VESSEL. SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING WITH ZHUK, CREW LIST VISA TELEGRAMS FOR BOTH SHIPS ARRIVED AND DEPARTMENT WAS ABLE ON ONE-TIME BASIS TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENT FOR 14 SOVIETS FROM BONDARENKO TO WAIT FOR ODESSA IN NEW ORLEANS. EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT WAS MADE CLEAR TO ZHUK.

4. DURING DISCUSSION WITH ZHUK, TREICHEL POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEM WHICH ZHUK PRESENTED IN BOTH THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC CASES DESCRIBED ABOVE RESEMBLED IN SOME RESPECTS THE PROBLEM OF US CITIZEN PASSENGERS ON US-FLAG FREIGHTERS BEING DENIED PERMISSION TO GO ASHORE IN SOVIET PORTS. USG HAS BEEN TRYING FOR SOME TIME TO GET THE SOVIETS TO DEAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 042449

WITH THIS PROBLEM AND DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS ON THE SUBJECT. IT WAS HARD FOR US TO CONSIDER MEASURES TO FACILITATE THE SOVIETS IN OUR PORTS IN SUCH MATTERS WHEN THE SOVIETS REFUSED TO DEAL WITH SUCH A MINOR PROBLEM INVOLVING OUR CITIZENS IN THEIR PORTS. VANCE

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